COMFORTS

Against the fear of

DEATH.

Being some short Meditations, composed by that precious Gentlewoman Mrs. *Anne Sutton*, late of Norwich.

Wherein are several Evidences of the work of Grace in her own Soul, which were the stay of her Heart, against the fear of Death. From which may be discerned the frame of a true Christian spirit.

To which is added some short Notes of a Sermon preached at the Burial of that choyce Servant of God in St. *Andrews* in Norwich.

By JOHN COLLINGES M.A. and one of the most unworthy Embassadors of Jesus Christ for the preaching of the Gospel in the said City.

Phil. 1. 21. *For to me to live, is Christ; and to dye, is gain.*

Ver. 23. *For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.*

London, Printed by *J. M.* for *Nathaniel Brooks*, and are to be sold at his shop at the Angel in *Cornhil*. 1649.

TO

My truly honored Friend

WILLIAM SKELTON, Gent.

Increase of Happiness and Comfort.

SIR,

'Tis my happiness, that I can be acquainted a little in her writings with her, with whom God was pleased to give me so short a time of acquaintance in this life. Sir, though I could not deny my worthless labors, as my last piece of service to her; yet, had it not been to tempt out this little piece into the world, I should have denyed this Sermon any further publication then the Pulpit in which it was preached. I need not excuse it to you (Sir) who know enough what *impar onus humeris* constantly lies upon my shoulders, that I had neither time to compose it, nor yet since to enlarge or refine it; but have sent you my own Notes, *eadem verba*, as the first day written. I shall beg, Sir, That her Notes may be prefixed to the Sermon; I shall be a little covered under so sweet a shadow, and the Readers expectation

will be satisfied, before his eye reacheth my Sermon: But, Sir, (without a Complement, which is but the folly of excuse) the Sermon holds out something of Christ, his name is precious: Reading, Rhetorick, &c. are but the poverty of the Creatures endeavors. In her writing you will be a Spectator to a pitcht battel, fought betwixt her Soul and Death: My Sermon will present you with the Conquerour, singing Triumph, we fight, but Christ conquers; nay, to speak truth, he both fights, and conquers too. After I had seen her upon her death-bed, so fully triumphing over the King of Terrors, I could not but at her Funeral rejoyce, concerning Death, with crying, *O Death, where's thy sting? O Hell, where's thy victory?* It hath often pleased my secret thoughts, to remember her, over-looking Death, when the pangs of Death had taken hold of her. Ah Sir! how sweet is it to have an assurance of Christs love? What a noblenes of spirit is there in the true Christian, that can call Death and Hell cowards? It is no marvel to see a profane beastly wretch (whose conscience the Lord hath seared to damnation) dying

quietly

quietly; but to see a knowing Christian, of an awakened conscience, to dye triumphingly, and make an holy-day of leaving all Creature-contentments; O this is the mighty Conquest of the Soul, through the great work of him that hath led Captivity captive! Sir, methinks it should comfort you to think how willing she was to part with you, (though before more dear then her own life to her.) It argued no want of love, to desire Christs company more then yours. Alas! Sir, you never dyed upon the Cross for her. Let it refresh you, Sir, to think how much you were beholden to the Bridegroom of Glory, that he would trust you with his Bride so long a time: The enjoyment of such a Saint thirty yeats (Sir) is a great piece of Heaven. Is she gone? No Sir; only restored: Where she is, she is in good keeping; and as well-beloved as she loves. You have resigned her, Sir: And it was but Justice that the Lord Jesus should have his Wife, when he sent such a messenger for her as would not be denyed: Ah! Sir, let us follow, she is gone before; It should seem her Mansion was ready before ours: or (which is most

most probable) her soul was fitter for it then ours: She was first dress't, and therefore is half gone to take her walk in the Paradise of God. Sir, let us blush, and get ready; how long shall her glory antidate ours? But it will be some comfort to think, that though she hath got the start in Heaven before us, yet she will be walking there till we come: It is a rare walk, that wearies not the feet of the Redeemed ones: Here we walk upon stones, there we shall have gardens walk, and legs that cannot be weary. But yet let us make haste, there's odds betwixt Earth and Heaven, what ever our enjoyments here be. This Sermon, or rather her own prefixed Meditations, may mind you of her, Sir, who now is before the Throne, and is satisfied with the likeness of him who is *the brightness of his Father's glory*. I beseech you Sir, as it minds you of her, so let it quicken you after her. So shall God have the glory, your soul the comfort, and he the answer of his prayers, who is, Sir,

From my study in Compt's fields by Norwich, August 25. 1648.

Your most unworthy Servant in the work of the Lord Jesus,

JOHN COLLINGS.

TO THE CHRISTIAN AND Ingenious Reader,

Especially such as fear Death, for want of assurance of Christs Love.

Christian Reader,

Here present thee with a copy, after which I would have thee to write; some few Meditations of that precious Saint of God Mistris Anne Skelton; *I need not speak for her; as these parents said of their child, so I shall say of her,* She is of age, let her speak for her self: *Of age she is, for she hath taken up her inheritance in Glory; what her life was let her books speak. It was not her course to trifle away her time, by sleeping or dressing, as the most of her quality use to do; God had given her another Spirit, viz. to strive to go as fast to Heaven, as most gallants do to go before each other in ball-*

I was acquainted with but a few of her last days; but it was easie to discern by the honey the laboriousness of the Bee: Her reported practise was to have made Heaven her [work] and the necessary things of this world her recreation: if her time allotted for worldly affairs, would allow her any minutes for God, she would improve them, which would do her no good, she was resolved they should do her no hurt, by committing sacriledg upon her religious hours; if her Kitchen would lend no time to her Closet, yet she would be sure it should steal not a minute from it. For her worldly employments, as she was conscientious in her relations, so she was impatient when she could wash the pitch from her fingers, and have liberty to go sit with her God. Her Closet work was no chambering and wantonness, but a serious study to make her calling and election sure: To this end she reads with understanding, observing, and carefully transcribing the promises: she had gathered up her Bonds, and knew how much God owed in his word on accompt to her Soul, and was never in rest, but she had a hand to put in suit, knowing that he

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was faithful that had promised. She was a conscientious attender upon God in his Ordinances, and it was her practise not to hear as one that looks his natural face in a glass, that presently goeth away and forgetteth what manner of man he was: She would observe material passages, and upon her retirements record them with her pen; if in any thing she doubted, she ceased not till she was satisfied. And whereas it is the too blame-worthy practise of Christians to seek cavils against themselves, striving by their cavillings to unsettle their spirits; she rather studyed to make it her work to find what interest God had in her Soul, then what she might have to say against her self, and in this was her labour without fruit. Thou shalt read here what a wrestling she had with God for Heaven, to make it sure to her Soul; and what strivings, for the Lord had crowned her Souls endeavours with such an assurance, as sealed her Soul in her dying hour. It was my happiness to be a witness to the latter end of her life: It pleased God to continue her holy day to the last hour, in such a measure, that

that Death had not an ill look from her. There might'st thou have seen Christian, what a conquest Christ had made over Death and Hell, Death had in her truly lost his sting, and Hell was cheated of its victory. Captivity was led Captive. I shall commend to thee this little piece, penned with her own hand, (by which thou might'st discern with what an excellency of Grace, as well as Gifts the Lord had crowned her.) I commend it to thee, not to be read only, but that (as by a true touchstone) thou mayst try thy own Soul by it, and find whether thou be'st ready to die or no. Thou shalt find this choice Servant of God dealing truly with her own heart, neither presumptuously flattering, nor unnecessarily dejecting her own Spirit. For what of mine is added, I desire thee take the good will, that he must offer it heart to thy Soul I acknowledge there is nothing of any dollar in it; if there be the more of Christ, let God have the Glory, thy Soul the benefit, and the Author thy prayers, who is

Thy true Servant
in the work of
the Lord Jesus,
John Collings.

From my study
the 4th of Aug. 47.
1648.

Infallable Signes
OF
Saving Grace,

Each one an Evidence for Heaven, each Evidence an Antidote against the Fear of Death; Death being to the Soul endowed with Grace only Heavens Gate, to enter in, by, or through it, to Eternal Glory and Happiness.

[illegible] an irrevokable decree of Heaven, that all men must [illegible] once dye; yea it is the Law of the God of Nature, and must be obeyed (notwithstanding it.) The Scripture saith, it is appointed to all men once to dye; Therefore oh my Soul, seeing there is no escaping Death, thy only way is to prepare for it

get the sting of it taken away, so shall it not have that, nor be terrible to thee; no cause then to fear Death, for it shall be but a messenger sent from God, thy Father, to fetch thee home to him, and free thee from all sins, which is thy greatest burden, and all sorrows and miseries that sin occasioneth, and carry thee to Heaven, to Happiness and Glory, to thy Saviour and Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, to raign with him, for ever, in Heaven.

Now the only way, to make Death thus to thee, is, to clear up thy evidences for Heaven. Wherefore, oh my Soul, get thee more interest in Christ, make that more sure to thy self, that Christ is thine, and thou art his, and then no cause at all for thee to fear death.

As it is certain that Death will come even to thee, as well as to others, so is it most uncertain, the time when it shall come. Therefore (my Soul) defer it not, for it stands thee as much upon as thy life, nay as thy eternal well being for ever more, to make that sure to thy self, even now, while it is called to day, and that upon good grounds, that thou hast a sure title to Heaven, art an heir of it, and hast an

interest

Interest in Christ, then it shall be well with thee after Death, that shall be a happy change for thee, no cause then to fear it. Therefore, oh my Soul, why art thou so cast down? And why art thou so disquieted within me? And why feareſt thou Death so much? Hast thou not some Evidences of Truth of Saving Grace to prove thou art in Christ? Darst thou deny it? Thou canst not: Oh therefore now clear them up, view them well again, meditate on them seriously, bless God for them, and let them support and comfort thee against the fear of Death, at all times, in all extremities or distresses whatsoever may befall thee.

Consider seriously with thy self, hath not God promised to support thee in, and deliver thee out of all afflictions and distresses in the best time, and mean while that all shall work for thy good? Therefore trust thou in him, for he never fails any that trust in him; rest thou on his promise, and he will make it good to thee.

The first ground work of Grace in thee is this, God hath given thee the sight of thy self, thy sinful, wretched and miserable, yea damnable condition by nature,

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thy sins, both many and great, as well thy inbred corruption, of which *David* complains, *Psalm.* 51. As also thy continued actual transgressions, all thy life along, which are the fruits of that bitter root, either outward or inward; to wit, thy natural averseness to all good, proneness to evil, perverseness of heart, rebelliousness of will, disorder of affections, and distemper of thy whole Soul, in every part; not as a mere natural disturbance only, but as a spiritual disease, a wicked and wretched disposition, evil in it self, & of it self displeasing to God, and deserving his curse, and damnation of thy Soul and body, although it should never break forth into any actual excess. And now, my Soul, hath not God also in some measure humbled thee, and broken thy heart too, for thy sins? Are they not a burden, too heavy for thee to bear? Were thou not once in thine own apprehension, in a most desperate condition, ready to sink under the load of them? Therefore, oh my Soul, to Christ calleth thee to come to him, and promiseth, he will ease thee, *Matt.* 11. 28. There is a promise for thy faith to feed on, apply it to thy self, to support thee; Dost thou not confess

confess them to God, bewailing them with great grief and sorrow of heart? Yea dost thou not abhor thy self, judg and pass on thy self the sentence of condemnation, to be thy due desert, and that it were just with God if he had cast thee into hell long ago?

No, no hypocrite, ever was willing to have this filthy sink of his wholly laid open to God, as thou, my Soul, art.

But did God leave thee in this miserable, wretched, desperate and damnable condition thou art in by nature, since the fall of *Adam*, whose sons thou were then in, and so guilty of his sin, and not only so, but deprived of that Image of God, that there is in thee nothing that is good, but a strange averseness and unaptness to all good, and a prone ness and readiness to all evil?

No, no, for ever blessed, praised and magnified be my good God, that out of his own free and unspeakable love, infinite mercy, and abundant goodness, he hath found out a way, and shewed thee a way, and means, to free thee from this misery, save, and make thee eternally happy, that neither Angels nor men could do, nor would

attempt

nor power, no man in Heaven or Earth could do it; as Acts 4.12. *Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under Heaven given amongst men, whereby we must be saved.* Even then God manifested his superabundant, surpassing, unsearchable, unexpressable, incomprehensible love to the utmost, to give his only begotten and deerly beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Person in the Trinity: God to take upon him our nature, and dye and shed his most pretious blood for sinners, of whom thou art chief; and in the Gospel God offereth his Son Christ freely, to all that will come and drink of this water of Life freely, as *Rev.* 22.17. therefore as freely to thee as any other.

Yet further, to heighten this wonderful Love of God, consider the time when he did this, even then when thou desiredst it not, nor soughtst it, nay when thou wert an enemy and traytor to him; and then for God so infinite in Majesty, so to condescend to poor wretched sinful man, that had so faln and plunged himself into such a woful, sinful and damnable condition; Oh how great is the riches of his mercy

mercy and love? Yea God ceaseth not there, but beholdeth more in the Gospel, he opens the worth, Excellency, All sufficiency and Fitness of Christ, to save thee, in particular, and he helps thee with grounds and incouragements to believe in Christ, though but weakly, and he doth, in some measure, strengthen thee, to resist and cast thy self, on his mercy in Christ, because of his promise; yea at such times as there is a sense of the want of him, so *David*, *Psal.* 42. 5, 8, 9. 11. Why art thou cast down, my Soul, hast thou not accepted of, and imbraced this free offer, or tender of Christ, made to thee, by God thy Father, in as much as the Gospel is preached to thee, and that upon his own terms, in all his offices, applying him to thy self, to be thy King and Soveraign Lord, to rule and govern thee, by his Laws, his Word, and his Spirit, to be thy Prophet, to discover the Counsels of God to thee, and reveal himself to thee in his Gospel, and to guide and instruct thee in his Paths? Dost thou not as much, and heartily desire, to have Christ rule thee, as to save thee, or to be a Priest, to offer up himself a Sacrifice for thee? Thou darest not, thou canst not deny it.

2. The second Sign or Evidence of Saving Grace, is, the earnest and unsatisfied, restless desire of Christ. Nothing but Christ can satisfie my Soul; I Christ after him, my heart pants for him, as the Hart after the rivers of waters, so panteth my Soul for thee, O Lord, and I will never give thee rest, but will wrastle with thee, as thy Servant Jacob once did, I will never let thee go, thou that hast promised to give Christ to them that ask, till thou give me Christ, and make me to know, that he is mine, and I am his. I can in truth say so far as I can search and know mine own heart, if it do not deceive me, as the Apostle saith, *Phil. 3. 7, 8. The things that were advantages to me, I now account loss, for Christs sake; yea I esteem all things but as dung in comparison of Christ.*

Do not thou, my Soul, prize Christ far afore all outward contentments? Even in the height of them, they are but as withered flowers to thee; no pleasure nor sweetness in them without Christ: Nay, no inward corruption but thou art right willing to part with for him.

It's not the manner of Hypocrites to be thus willing to relinquish all outward con-

contentments, much lefs to abandon all inward corruptions for Christ, but in them is still some private Reservation.

But the earnest desire of my Soul is, to have all sin subdued in me. Lord, Lord, by the power of thy holy Spirit, mortifie and kill every sin. Oh let not any one sin rule in me, that I should obey it, in the lust of it; though sin dwell with in me, yet let me overcome it, truly it is my heavy burden, that I am so yoked with him, therefore long I to go out of my self, for in me is nothing that is good.

But in Christ is all ability to duty, and against sin, all life and profit from the Ordinances, and Christ shines all, especially to his Members, by their relying on him for it, which we call believing.

Now God's gracious invitations, to come to Christ, should my Soul, deeply imbrace, and upon the serious consideration of the all-sufficiency, fitness and willingness of Christ to save thee, and the infinite love of the Father to give his Son for thee, and the unspeakable love of Christ, in his condescention to the Father, so to dye, and undergo all the wrath of God, and all for thee, and the freeness of the mercy of

God, offering Christ in the Gospel, and his Commandment to believe, as 1 John 3. 23. *And this is his Commandment, That we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ.* Also the fulness and freeness of his promises to them that believe. Now in obedience to the one, and confidence of the other, thou, my Soul, art at length thereby emboldened and incouraged to repair to Christ; and by the freeness of the promises, art incouraged to apply them to thy self, not daring to exclude thy self, but dost believe, though but weakly.

3. A third Sign or Evidence of Saving Grace is, if thy faith, thy full purpose of heart, and fixed resolutions, and endevors, still ever to rest and rely upon the Lord Jesus, and his merits alone, for the discharge of thy sins, thy sanctification, Justification, thy soul's safety and salvation; this is indeed is the very act of justifying Faith, or which life and salvation is to us in the word promised, and shall unfailably be made good to us: well therefore mayst thou rest satisfied in it; yea still rest on him to strengthen thy weak faith. I say not, that Faith, as my act, doth justifie me; but it is instru-

instrumental, as it's a hand to receive Christ, and unite thee to him, whose righteousnes alone is the meritorious cause of thy Justification.

Now here is a promise for thee to rest on, *John* 3.16,36. *Whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life*; And *he that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life.*

Now, my Soul, exercise thy Faith, apply this promise to thy self: I believe, and therefore I shall have everlasting life: Labor for that reflect act of thy Soul, to know more, that thou dost believe? The sincerity whereof in thee, as in some measure approved, by thy resigning, and giving up thy self wholly to him, as the Apostle, *Gal.* 2.20. *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* Desiring, as well to be ruled and guided by him, as saved by him, purged, as pardoned, freed from the power, as the punishment of sin, cleansed from the filth, as discharged of the guilt of sin.

vi. What though thou art not able wholly to perfect in practise, but dost fail oft, and come short in performance thereof; was not this the Apostle *Paul* his own case which he so largely deploreth, *Rom.* 7. 15. 23. *I allow not that which I do, for what I would that do I not, but what I hate that do I. I see another Law in my members rebelling against the Law of my mind, and leading me Captive to the Law of sin which is in my members.* It sufficeth to warrant the sincerity of thee, my Soul and Spirit in this case; that with the same Apostle in the same place: Thou takest notice of thy failings, art grieved for them, there is in thee a nature or part that abhors them, thou watchest against them, & endeavorest what thou canst, to reclaim thy self, upon discovery of failing, laborest by earnest prayer to God against them, and continuest constant in the use of the means sanctified by him, for spiritual strength and ability, and restest on Christ, and expectest from him power to overcome thy corruptions; Therefore comfort thy self herein (O my Soul,) and apply this to thy self, for thou art but in the same case that Apostle *Paul* was then in,

who

who at that very time had touch of grace, and was even then in a most happy and blessed condition; Therefore fear not, though thou findest many temptations, either to despair, or to think all thy hope but presumption; none of the Saints or Servants of God was ever heard praying to be rid utterly of their corruptions forthwith, and at once: Suffice them and thee; it may, and must, that he will one day rid them utterly of all, and mean while, to support thee: Know that thy corruptions shall never so prevail against thee as to reduce thee again to the sway and sovereignty it once had in thee, when it had its throne in thee; these shew that there is a part in thee that is regenerated as *Paul* had.

Now to such as these are the promises of God made good, *Mal.* 3. 16, 17. *A book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name: And they shall be to me, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day a stock, and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.* 2 Chron. 30. 18, 19, 20. *Hezekiah prayeth to the Lord to be merciful to*

him, that prepareth his whole heart to seek the Lord God, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary. And the Lord heard Hezekiah, and healed the people. Psal. 33. 18, 19. *Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, and upon them that trust in his mercy, to deliver their Souls from death, and to preserve them in famine.* Psal. 37. 40. *The Lord shall help them, and deliver them from the wicked, and shall save them, because they trust in him.* Psal. 34. 22. *The Lord redeemeth the Souls of his Servants, and none that trust in him shall perish.* Oh my Soul, set thy Faith a work, here are promises for it to rest on, apply them to thy self, for they are precious.

4. Another Sign or Evidence of Grace is, thy constant desire of, and love to the Ordinances of God, whereby these may be attained, and that for this very end, that thou mayst know what God requires of thee, and be enabled to practise it, and get strength against thy corruptions, endeavouring to apply thy self thereto, with delight in the use of them. This evidently testifies the sincerity of thy desire, love

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and affection to God, as *David* urgeth oft, and presseth the like for himself, *Psal.* 119. 11. *I have hid thy promise in my heart that I might not sin against thee.* Also, Vers. 24. *Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors.* And Vers. 33. *Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I will keep it even to the end.* Also, Vers. 40. *Behold I desire thy commandments; quicken me in thy righteousness.*

Hypocrites desire the end only, delight in them, for by and sinister ends; not enduring them, where they find they cross their corruptions: But the closer they come home to thee, and most strike at thy corruptions, the better thou likest, and more lovest them; thou dost not spare any sin: *I have sworn that I will keep thy righteous judgments.* Psa. 119. 106.

Another evidence of Saving Grace, is, 5. thy hatred of every false way, desiring God to discover to thee thine iniquity, that thou art most prone, or apt est to fall into, by natural inclination, custom, or company; This was made an argument of *Davids* integrity. Therefore, O my Soul, make thou the same application to

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thy self also, to uphold and comfort thee.

And dost thou not groan under the burthen of thy inward corruptions, and thoughts, as well as actual transgressions? Wouldst not thou fain be rid of them? Is it not thy greatest grief, that thou dost dayly so sin against God, who is so good, so loving and merciful to thee? Thou darest not deny it. Oh that I might and could so live, as never to commit any one sin more, so long as I live, to offend so good a God as he is to me, not no more grieve nor quench his holy Spirit in the motions of it! I resolve so to do, Oh that I could do so!

6. Another sign of true Grace, Hast thou not respect unto all Gods Commandments, desiring universality of sincere obedience to all alike, not shunning any one, nor reserving any sin to thy self. So *David*, Psa. 119. 5, 6. *O that my ways were directed to keep thy Statutes: Then should I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy Commandments.* And when fallen, dost thou not loath thy self the more for that, and renew thy faith in Christ, and repentance as sin is renewed

newed, and feelst it more and more vile, judging thy self miserable, because that which is contrary to Gods will prevails over thee? And so thou dost overcome sin, though oft foiled by it, that which yet may stand with grace, though it abide to death in thee. Now, my Soul, dost thou not mourn under this, Pray earnestly, and rest withal on Christ for help and assistance of his Spirit to enable thee to overcome all thy corruptions, still striving against them, (thou darest not deny it:) And with unfeigned purpose never entertaining any known evil with full consent of will, but cordially embracing the contrary grace and command, longing after more grace out of the sense of want of it? This is an infallible sign of true grace, as *Matth.* 5. 6. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.* Therefore my Soul, apply this by faith; Bless God with humility, and take the comfort of it, that so thou mayst walk the more thankfully, and love him more who hath so loved thee; and be more careful of all thy ways.

Another evidence, or mark of true 7.

Grace

Grace, is, thy resolving in the sence of Gods absence, yet then to stick to, and rest on his mercy through Christ, even unto death, by his assistance, *Psal* 13. 1. *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?* Verse 5. *But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoyce in thy salvation.*

So still continue thou resting on Christ alone as to work in thee all grace, both to will and do, so to strengthen and perfect it to the day of Christ, as *Philip.* 1. 6. And begging of God his Spirit, who is the Spirit of Grace, to help and enable thee, it being the sap to make thee fruitful, for of thy self thou canst do nothing pleasing to God; but all thy services, as of thy self, are an abomination in Gods presence: But now if they come from Christ and the Spirit, then God is well pleased with them, and accepts them: And remember God hath promised to give the Spirit to them that ask it, *Mat.* 21. 22. *Whatsoever we ask in Christs name, if we believe, we shall receive.* And *Luke* 11. 13. *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children;*

children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Lee that comforteth thee, this was an argument to David of grace in him, let it be so to thee.

8. Another evidence of Grace, is, thy confident resting on Gods mercy because of his promise: it is that upholds thee, knowing he is most faithful, as he cannot be deceived, so he will not deceive any that trust in him: so David did, Psa. 119. Sir. My Soul fainteth for thy Salvation, and I wait for thy Word: When David heart fainted, this very thing stayed him, namely, that he trusted in Gods Word: Psal. 18. Blessed is he that trusteth in the Lord. Psa. 12. Blessed are all they that trust in him. Psal. 18. Blessed are they that wait for him. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.

And doth not thou, my Soul, still seek, wait, pray, hope, and in this an humble dependency thou still rest on God always, though with much opposition? Yea when thou feelest no sensible evidence of Gods love and favor to thee,

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yet even then Gods Word comforts thee; thou hast given me more joy of heart then they have whose outward comforts abound, as *Psal.* 4. 7. So thy Word comforts my Soul, in the midst of great doubtings, distress and trouble, yea then, my Soul, hast still some hope, by casting thy self on thy God, when other hopes fail, as *David*, Psal. 142. 2, 3. *I poured out my complaint before him, though my spirit was even overwhelmed.* Yet Vers. 5. Even then saith he, *I cryed unto thee, O Lord, and said, thou art my hope and my portion in the land of the living.* Now, Oh my Soul, is not God thy portion also? Indeed he is, hast not thou taken him so to be? Yes truly, even so be thy All; and thou hast, I hope, with a cordial resignation, given up all thy interest to the Lord and his service, at least desirest and endeavourest so to do in thy resolutions. Good Lord put forth thy mighty, yea almighty power, and give me thy Spirit that may teach me, and enable me to walk as becometh such a one as hath given up himself to serve thee; That I may, in the remainder of my life, express all sincere and humble obedi-

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ence to the Word delivered? O that I could!

Another evidence of Saving Grace, is, 9.
Thou dost often afresh renew thy faith and confidence in Christ, and resigne and give up thy self wholly to Christ to be guided and instructed by his Word and Spirit; and this purpose is firm in thee. And dost thou not in bitterness of soul bewail and grieve for thy exceeding unfruitfulness and unprofitableness under such sweet, precious, and powerful ordinances as thou hast so long time enjoyed, and implore the throne of Grace for the Spirit to shew for this present vertue to make them become life and powre to thee, and thou feel them work hope in Christ? And since that the way to make them more profitable is to be more sensible of thy particular wants, and to prize the ordinances very highly, as the very breasts from and through which God conveys all nourishment to his; Therefore quicken up thy self, O my soul, to use them with what care and diligence thou canst, and rest not in the ordinance, but on God: Consider what God can and will do for thee, expect

dayly

daylie help and strength from him, in the
use of his ordinances, and especially in
that of the Sacrament, act faith, and re-
fect all discouragements, for they hinder
the growth of grace, as frosts do tender
fruits. O when shall the time be that
the ordinances shall be so powerful and
efficacious as to kill all my corruptions,
that I may understand the vertue of
Christ's death killing the body of sin in
me, and the power of his resurrection
raising me up to newness of life, that holy
language of heart that hath been in other the
servants of God? Sure there hath been
such a changing, quickening, raising, com-
forting power attained from God in the
use of his ordinances, both to beget, and
to a strengthening and encrease. Oh!
therefore I will never let the Lord alone
until he make them so to me, seeing he
hath promised. *He that asketh, receiveth,*
and to him that knocketh, and it shall
be opened unto you. Much do I desire
and I seek, I knock, I strive to obtain. [Lord]
fulfil thine own free and gracious promise,
(though I be) thou canst not any way
be said to make it void (yet Lord) it is now thy
work.

promise.

promise, that thou wilt give Grace to them that seek it, and ask it, and hunger after it. Lord, I desire it more than my appointed food; [thou Lord] sure, I trust, will be prevailed with: Seeing the unjust Judg was so through importunity, shall not the just and righteous, yea merciful God, be prevailed withall, when importuned for that which he promiseth to give? Yes surely, he will most certainly make good even that promise to thee [my soul] in particular. Do but trust in him, and press him with his own Word; nay more, it's a part of that new Covenant that God hath made with his servants, that he will take away the heart of stone, that is, all that hinders Grace, and he will *give them a new heart, and put his Laws in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be his people, Jer.* 31. 33. and *Ezek.* 36. 25, 26, 27.

And that he will put his Spirit within us, and cause us to walk in his statutes, believe so, and it shall be so to thee. Be encouraged, and wrestle still, for thou shalt obtain in the end. Hath God said it? Build thou on it: Only go on in use

of his means, least not the holy one, he is a free Agent, he may work when and how he pleaseth, he delights to hear his children pray, and cry out to him; and remember how prevalent prayer in Faith hath been with God, how great things it hath obtained of God, for particular Servants of God, as that of *Peters* delivery by the prayers of the Church, *Acts* 12. when condemned to dye the next morning, and no way or means that he knew of to escape; And so for Nations too. Doth the Lord then say, seek my face? Oh let my heart Answer, Lord, thy face I do, I will still seek, and wait till thou Answer.

10. Another Evidence of Grace is, Thy earnest desire to serve the Lord, in sincerity, with an upright heart, above the desire of Life it self; so far as thou canst search, and knowest aught by thy self; this must needs be an infallible sign of true Grace; for nothing but truth of Grace can possibly desire this.

11. Another sign of true Grace, is, Thou feareste, at some times, that thou hast no true Faith, or at least, that it is decaying, & dying with thee, when as no true Grace, either

either ſtands at a ſtay, or decays, which makes thee full of diſcouragements and diſquietneſs of ſpirit, fearing thy eſtate is not good; but what ever change is in thee (O my Soul) of ſeeming decay in Grace, or increaſe of corruption, yet thou canſt not but be ſure in the main; for where there is a ſenſe of ſins evil, and a groaning under it, a high Valuation of Chriſt, and Grace, and longing after it with a ſelf-emptineſs, a deſire and purpoſe to hang on Chriſt, (as thou dareſt not deny, but is in ſome meaſure in thee,) there is ground of comfort, and therefore apply it to thy ſelf, elſe thou wrongeſt thy ſelf, and the ſpirit alſo. Thou feareſt falling into ſin, let it make thee more watchful, and truſt more and more carefully in Chriſt; the view of thy wants ſhould not diſcourage thee, but abaſe thee in thine own eſteem, quicken thee to uſe the means, and preſs thee to go to Chriſt, and reſt on him, who can and will help all that thus repair to him: Therefore fear not falling off, for God hath promiſed to put his fear into the hearts of his, that they ſhall not depart from him, Jer. 32.40. Apply that promiſe to thy ſelf by Faith.

Having once true Grace, it can never be lost; why therefore *(O my Soul) art thou so cast down, and why art thou so disquieted within me? Trust still in God, for I will, or shall, yet give him thanks; he is my present help, and my God*, Psalm 42. 5, 11. verses. Or art thou thus disquieted, because thou art often foiled by sins, that thou resolvest against?

Oh consider, thou hast an Advocate with the Father Jesus Christ, who is thy Reconciliation; he sitteth at the right hand of God, and there he pleads thy cause for thee. Or is it because thou art still full of fears, that thy Grace is not true? Thou didst once beleeve it was true, and that upon good ground; Therefore question not that ground-work now, that were to go about to rip up, or undo, all that work of Grace that God hath wrought in thee.

Why then is it, O my Soul, because of those inward corruptions within thee that rebel against the Law and Will of God, and such effects of them as thou canst not be rid off, with whatsoever care and caution thou canst use? Or such sins, slips, and oversights, as thou art unwillingly over-

overtaken withall, or doſt inconſiderately ſlip into? For thou doſt not allow thy ſelf in any known ſin.

For this remember what was once my Cozen *Gataker's* Anſwer hereunto; to wit, conſider S. *Paul* his caſe, read but what he ſaith of himſelf, *Rom.* 7. from *verſ.* 15. to *verſ.* 24. *That which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I conſent unto the Law, that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me: For I know that in me (that is, in my fleſh) dwelleth no good thing. For to will is preſent with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would that do I not, but the evill which I hate that do I. I find then a Law, that when I would do good evil is preſent with me. For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man; but I ſee another Law in my members, warring againſt the Law of my mind, and bringing me into Captivity to the Law of ſin which is in my members.*

And if you can ſay more of your ſelf, then he there doth of himſelf, I much

ward: if not, you may conclude, your estate to be no worse then his was.

God indeed hears the prayers of his, but yet he doth not presently give in kind the thing prayed for: The Apostle *Paul* was heard, when he prayed to be rid wholly of some corruption and temptation that he was anoyed and often foiled with. 2 *Cor.* 12. 7, 8. *Lest I should be exalted above measure, through the Abundance of the Revelations, there was given to me a thorne in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.* Remember Gods Answer to him, *vers.* 9. *My Grace is sufficient for thee.* So shall it be, my Soul, to thee; if thou rest on his Word it shall be so. But mark, he was not presently freed from it, but upheld in it. Or is it out of the sense of thy want and great need of more Grace? Oh let not that discourage thee! indeed thou hast the more need to go to Christ by Faith, who is the Fountain and Spring of all, he hath enough, and so fetch vertue and strength from him; beleeve more, and thou shalt have more Grace; that is the only way to obtain it.

And

And remember Mr. Webber's Answer once to thee, concerning this particular: (Dear Sister) Let not Satan make thee doubt upon such and such of Sins, that is no Evidence or effect of Grace, and so not until Grace be. It is a sign there hath not been Grace, but that there shall [illegible] These things which make thee doubt, add doubt to the former, make me afraid of the goodness of thy state. Satan ever makes that to be sinful and doubtful that is truly good. These be conflicts of corruption and temptation which accompany Grace. These be that smoak that argues fire; and Christ will not quench the smoaking Flax. They be effects of sanctification, therefore be comforted herewith, I beseech you.

Another sign of truth of Grace is, Thy very fear and jealousie of thy own unsoundness and deceitfulness of thy heart; this acquits thee of hypocrisie, and justifies thy sincerity; this is a holy jealousie, fair of falseness to God, and thus thou are not in security in thee. 12.

For first, These dispositions in thee, desires and endeavors, being signs of Grace, must of necessity be granted to be signs

of sincerity; since, that that is no grace in truth, that is not sincere.

Secondly, thy diligent search and inquiry into thy self, and jealousie of thy self, is an evident argument of the sincerity of thy heart, and that thou wouldst not deceive thy self with flattery, false or vain hopes.

§ 13. Another signe of true Grace, is, thy putting thy self upon tryal of others, that thou didst not rest satisfied with thine own tryal of thy self, but desiredst Gods Ministers, whom thou didst judg most sincere, strict, and faithful, much pressing them, to deal truly, plainly and freely with thee, without any flattery; as they will one day answer it to the great God of Heaven. And they bear witness to thee, my soul, from Gods own Word, of the truth of Grace in thee. Thou didst not account thy own poor weak endeavors, to search and try thy self sufficient, although thou didst it to the utmost of thy power and ability; apprehending, that they might be more able to discover, some deceit of thy heart, that thou couldst not finde out.

14. There follows another signe of saving

grace,

grace, that is yet farther, Thou hast put thy self upon the Lords own work. How often hast thou in secret, gone to thy *God* on thy knees, and earnestly intreated, and beseeched him to search thy heart, and reins, thy most secret sins, and intimate corruptions; and that he would shew thee thine iniquity, and cleanse thee from thy sin, not willing to hide any one from him? so *David*, *Psal.* 139. 23, 24. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me.*

And the Lord hath at sometimes made answer to thy heart, That he is thine, and thou art his, shewed some little glimpse of his love and favor to thee, as it were a pure evisa, which hath been more joy of heart to thee, then if thou hadst a thousand worlds. Therefore, O my soul, praise thou this *God* of love; *and all that is within me, praise his holy name*, as *Psal.* 103. 1.

Oh magnifie his *free-grace*, *mercy*, and *love*, that he hath given thee some love-tokens, as pledges of more hereafter. Oh my soul, raise up thy self to sound out the praises of the Lord; and all that is within

within me, bless his great and glorious name. For truly, he hath dealt bountifully with thee. Oh how can I, how shall I, express my thankfulness unto him? Surely, I will tell others, what the Lord hath done for my poor soul, that they also may trust in him. For truly, its never in vain to seek and wait, and trust in the Lord. Therefore, O my soul, do not be so much cast down, and so disquieted within me. *Wait on God, for I shall* (that is, he will give me cause to) *give him thanks; he is my present help, and my God.* As *David* said, so say I. Oh that I could chide my soul out of its unquiet condition! seeing I cannot, I will complain to God of it, and desire him to do it for me, as *David* did, *Psal.* 42. 6. *O my God, my soul is cast down,* do thou raise and comfort it; for thou art able to do it. Though I cannot, I know thou Lord art able, to cheer and revive my drooping spirits; and thou wilt cause me to taste how good thou art, that I may set forth thy ravishing sweetness unto others, acquainting them, what great and unexpressible goodness, the Lord hath manifested to me. O dwell my soul a while here! suck more sweetness out.

out of this *love of God*. O how great is this love of *God*, that pardons all thy sins of nature, and custome! of long continuance, as well as later; great, as well as smaller; of omission, as well as commission; sins of ignorance and knowledge, secret sins, and more open sins; sins in thought, word and act; sins of thy youth and riper age! He blots them out all, as a creditor that takes his pen and blots out all debts, leaves none to condemn. O the greatness of this *infinite love of God*! O stand still and behold, what *love the Father* hath shewed! wonder, and be amazed, and ravished with this *love of all loves*! O the riches of this *love of God* to thee! O admirable, superabundant, surpassing *love*! O excellent, precious, sweet, unheard of *love*! O wonderful indeed, rare, unspeakable, unutterable, unexpressible, incomprehensible *love*! O love everlasting! one dram whereof, is better then life it self, much sweeter then the hony, and the hony comb.

Another Evidence of *Grace*, is, The sweet intercourse that hath been betwixt *God*, and thee my soul. Sometimes thy praying to him, his answering thee. *Gods*

upholding,

upholding and quieting thee sometimes in greatest dangers; so *Job* and *David*. Therefore, stir up thy faith, and live by it, for time to come. Thou hast humbled thy soul, and God hath comforted thy soul. Now he hath this communion with none, but his own children.

16. Another Evidence of *Grace*, is, Thy hearty sorrow and grief, for thy sinning against mercies, and unthankfulness for them, and not profiting by them; arising from the consideration of Gods goodness to thee, whom thereby thou dost offend. These are undoubted signes of *Grace*. *Psal.* 51. 3, 4, 5, 6, 9. *I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified, when thou speakest, and be cleared when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part, thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.* Psal. 19. 12, 13. *Cleanse me from my secret sins; keep thy servant also,*

so, that presumptious sins raign not over me. Rom. 7. 14, 15, 22, 23, 24. *For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin: For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I: For I delight in the Law of God, after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my minde; and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, Who shall deliver me from the body of this death.* 2 Cor. 7. 10. *Godly sorrow causeth repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of.* Lord give me more of that sorrow.

Now God reckons not thy failings, nor imputes thy corruptions to thee as thine; as by his Apostle, and his Spirit, speaking in him, he assures thee, *Rom. 7. 16, 17. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the Law, that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* But God accepts thy person and performances in his Son (as he did *Paul* there) though never so poor, and imperfect: he regardeth not so much, what thou art or dost, as what thou wouldst be, and do. An-

17. Another evidence of Saving Grace, is, thy hearty and true love to the children of God for Grace-sake, meerly for the good thou seest and beleevest to be in them, even those who otherwise thou could'st not love: this the Apostle *John* makes to be a signe, That *We are translated from death to life, because we love the brethren*, as 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. Therefore as it gives attestation for thee my Soul, so take thou the comfort of it from Gods own Word, and bless God with humble thankfulness for it: so *David*, Psa. 119. 63. *I am a companion to all them that fear thee, and keep thy precepts.*

18. Another signe of Grace, is this, Thy joy, and hope, and love is fixed and set not on things below, but on things above, in heaven; this argues that thou art risen with Christ, and is that which may well be a pledg and earnest to thee, that thou shalt one day appear in, and enjoy Glory with him: See *Col.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God: Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth: for ye are dead, and*

your

your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in Glory. Yea, thy present dis-esteem and undervaluing of all worldly honors, profits preferments or greatness, in the height of them, accounting them vain and of small value to thee; And indeed let worldlings hunt and scramble for them that have no better portion in heaven; But thou my Soul, I bless God, seest better, sweeter, and more precious and durable riches, spiritual things, that last for ever, that will satisfie the Soul: The love and favor of God, Heaven, and Glory everlasting, that shall never perish, and peace of conscience and pardon of sin, these indeed are well worth the desiring and laboring for: Alas! the other cannot afford one jot of comfort, nor satisfie the conscience when troubled for sin, or when death cometh. Oh then nothing but Christ will serve the turn, or stand in stead! Therefore now labor to get Christ to be thine, and then he will not leave nor forsake thee, no nor when thou comest to dye, and hast most need of him, when friends and all creature-comforts will

leave

leave us: And truly the greatness of the world doth oft steal away our hearts: These are baits and nets, both worldly credit and profit, I mean, that take many a soul in their nets, by means whereof many come to lose their souls ere they are aware of it, because they have no care or else no hearts to look after their precious Souls, that must last for ever, after these bodies, with all the fading comforts here below, are gone and perished. We do or may see how fleeting and uncertain all creatures and all comforts here are; every day sounds it in our ears, and continually our eyes may see it in the corps dayly carryed to their graves, and how *riches take their wings & flie away*, as *Prov.* 23.5. I am sure, within these few last years, God hath abundantly shewed, and fulfilled that Scripture. How many thousands, not only of the meaner sort, but of the great ones of the world, even now in these our days, worth very many hundreds a year, now have not bread for their families. Men get goods, that many times know not who shall enjoy them. But I will seek the Lord, for at his right hand are joys, and pleasures for evermore,

that

that ſhall laſt to all eternity. My Soul, this thy ſetled reſolution is a pregnant teſtimony of thy love and affection to God; As alſo that God hath created a new heart, and put a new ſpirit within thee; and thou therefore art become a new creature.

Again, That change, which God hath wrought in thee, is not always alike; not at all times ſo lively: Neither yet again at all times alike, cold, dead, and dull; not always dejected, not always comforted, becauſe as there is ſomething in thee ſpiritual, ſo alſo there is a part of fleſh in thee that wars againſt the Spirit: ſo is it with Gods Saints, with the Apoſtle *Paul*, & ſo with *David*, and the reſt: and when thou confeſſeſt thy ſins to God in ſecret, thou bewaileſt thy ſins of thought, which never trouble Hypocrites or other ſort of ſinners. 19.

Another ſigne of *Gods love* to thee, is this, Though thou haſt had ſore conflicts of long continuance, yet haſt thou not been overwhelmed, nor overcome, but upheld; and that thou uſeſt in them ſpiritual weapons, arguments from the power of *God*, and from the all-ſufficiency 20.

and goodness of *God*, and thine own experience of the same, having found the presence of the Spirit of *God* in power so supporting thee, that thou hast not fallen away, nor sunk under them, but resolved still to trust in *God* by his assistance, though he should kill thee, as *Job* did, *Job* 13.15. at that time when thou hast had no present comfort.

21. Another sign of true Grace is, Thy searching and earnest inquiry for what sin God layeth his hand of affliction upon thee; and thy mourning, that thou art no more bettered by afflictions, for that is Gods end in afflicting [his]; yea, that thou desirest to be draw'd nearer to God by them, that thou mayst say, that *it was good for thee that thou wert afflicted: And before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep thy word:* As *David*, *Psalm* 119. 67. Lord make good to me that promise, That *all things shall work together for good*; and therefore afflictions, *to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.* Rom. 8.28. Lord I would fain love thee, *The desire of my Soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee: With my Soul*

have

have I sought or desired thee in the night, and with my spirit within me will I seek thee in the morning. As *Isaiah* 26. 8, 9. For *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and I have desired none in the Earth with thee.* As *Psalm* 73. 25. And thou hatest sin, as it is a breach of Gods Law.

Another Evidence of Gods Love to thee, That at such times as thou hast renued thy Faith in Christ, and again given up thy self in more solemn manner wholy to him; God thereupon hath given ease to thy heart, which is a sign that he accepted what thou gavest him, and that he wil not cast thee away. *I know whom I have believed, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him,* as 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. And I am perswaded he will do so. And, my Soul, since thou hast found favor in the eyes of God, that he hath been pleased to manifest his Grace to thee, consider what cause thou hast of comfort and joy. Now that it may be aright conceived what Grace I mean; There is a twofold meaning of the word *Grace* in Scripture.

First, It is taken for the gracious good Will or Favor of God, whereby he is

pleaſed of his own free love, to accept of ſome in Chriſt for his own: This Divines call *firſt Grace*, becauſe it is the fountain of all other Grace, and the ſpring from whence they flow; and it's therefore called *Grace*, becauſe it makes a man gracious with *God*; but this is only in *God*.

Secondly, *Grace* is taken for the gifts of *Grace*, and they are of two ſorts; Common or ſpecial. Some are common to both Elect and Reprobates, Believers and Hypocrites; As Knowledg, a gift of prayer, and the like. Some are ſpecial *Graces*, and they are proper to the Saints, therefore called *ſaving Graces*; whereof, ſome are moſt principal, and abſolutely neceſſary unto Salvation; ſuch as is Faith, without which, none can be ſaved. And ſome other which are very comfortable, as the feeling of Gods love, Peace of Conſcience, Joy in the Holy Ghoſt. Now if God have, firſt, of his gracious good will, and free love, accepted thee in Chriſt: And ſecondly, if he have given thee, any evidence of the ſame, by the ſaving graces of his holy Spirit wrought in thee, (which thou dareſt not deny;) then, O my ſoul, bleſs, praiſe, and magnifie,

ſie, this God of love, for this his infinite, unutterable, and ſuperabounding love to thee. Hath he given thee any grace? Its becauſe he loves thee; and truly, no cauſe at all; why God ſhould love thee, as thou art in thy ſelf; but the clean contrary, rather to hate and abhor thee. But he looks upon thee, in his onely begotten, and dearly beloved ſon, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, God-man; and ſeeing no other means in all the world to ſave thee, Gods love was ſo great, That he gave his onely begotten ſon to die for thee. And ſee here alſo, the exceeding great love of Chriſt to thee, that gave himſelf to dye for thee, took thy nature on him, ſtood in thy ſteed, fulfilled the Law, ſatisfied the juſtice of God for thy ſin. He ſuffered on the Croſs for thee, he procured pardon of ſin, ſalvation, and heaven for thee, he merited it all for thee; for his was worthy; his righteouſneſs is the meritorious cauſe of thy juſtification. He is now thy Redeemer, thy Advocate, that pleads thy cauſe for thee to God; he makes peace with God for thee; he ſits at the right hand of God the Father, and makes interceſſion for thee. God, is now become

of a juſt, ſevere, and angry Judg, a loving Father in him.

Therefore now my ſoul, receive all from him by promiſe, that ſhews his love as a Father. Oh, the free, and ſweet love, that is in an uncompelled promiſe! *I will love thee freely*, ſaith the Lord, *Hoſea* 14. 4. Its free love indeed, in *God* to thee wards. Oh therefore, let this ſpecial free love of *God*, cauſe thee to ſtudy, how to return love to him, and live to him. Remember what he hath done for thee; how thy ſins wounded thy Saviour, peirced and crucified him, and nailed him to the croſs: how thy ſins made his moſt precious body, be overrun with his heart blood: how thy own betraying and ſelling thy ſoul to ſin, and Satan, made him to be betrayed, and ſold to ſuffer and die: yea, how he indured the torments of Hell, as it were, the moſt heavy and ſoreſt wrath of his Father for thy ſin. What, O what great and vehement love, was in Chriſt thy Saviour, that made him ſweat drops of blood for thee my ſoul? Theſe are as ſo many cords of love, from Chriſt to thee, to cauſe thee to love Chriſt. Oh, that I could love thee,

my

my dear Saviour, as I ſhould. Its my hearts grief, that I cannot ſo love thee, as I would. Oh my dull, and drouſie ſoul, awake, rouze, and quicken up thy ſelf, and ſtand amazed at this love of Chriſt. Shall, or can ſo many ſweet expreſſions of ſuch unexpreſſible love of Chriſt to thee, paſs without Eccho? Shall every paſſage of Chriſt, from his birth to his death, all preach forth love to thee? And ſhall thankfulneſs be wanting in thee towards him? Shall his birth, work thy new birth; his croſs take away thy curſe? Shall his pains procure thee reſt? Shalt thou be cleared by his ſorrowful ſadneſs? Thou be made free by his bonds, happy by his miſery, fed by his hunger, refreſht by his wearineſs, rejoyced by his anguiſh? [Thou, my Soul] be excuſed before *God*, by his being accuſed before men? And ſhall not love flush and burn in my breſt to him? Oh, my *God*, do thou inflame my heart with this Love; kindle ſome further heat of Love in me; give me one dram more of it; draw up my Love, and moſt entire & intimate affections. Shall I, as it were, freeze, for want of Love to my Saviour, when his Love is ſo hot to me?

of a juſt, ſevere, and angry Judg, a loving Father in him.

Therefore now my ſoul, receive all from him by promiſe, that ſhews his love as a Father. Oh, the free, and ſweet love, that is in an uncompelled promiſe! *I will love thee freely*, ſaith the Lord, *Hoſea* 14. 4. Its free love indeed, in *God* to thee wards. Oh therefore, let this ſpecial free love of *God*, cauſe thee to ſtudy, how to return love to him, and live to him. Remember what he hath done for thee; how thy ſins wounded thy Saviour, pierced and crucified him, and nailed him to the croſs: how thy ſins made his moſt precious body, be overrun with his heart blood: how thy own betraying and ſelling thy ſoul to ſin, and Satan, made him to be betrayed, and ſold to ſuffer and die: yea, how he indured the torments of Hell, as it were, the moſt heavy and ſoreſt wrath of his Father for thy ſin. What, O what great and vehement love, was in Chriſt thy Saviour, that made him ſweat drops of blood for thee my ſoul? Theſe are as ſo many cords of love, from Chriſt to thee, to cauſe thee to love Chriſt. Oh, that I could love thee,

my

my dear Saviour, as I ſhould. Its my hearts grief, that I cannot ſo love thee, as I would. Oh my dull, and drouſie ſoul, awake, rouze, and quicken up thy ſelf, and ſtand amazed at this love of Chriſt. Shall, or can ſo many ſweet expreſſions of ſuch unexpreſſible love of Chriſt to thee, paſs without Eccho? Shall every paſſage of Chriſt, from his birth to his death, all preach forth love to thee? And ſhall thankfulneſs be wanting in thee towards him? Shall his birth, work thy new birth; his croſs take away thy curſe? Shall his pains procure thee reſt? Shalt thou be cleared by his ſorrowful ſadneſs? Thou be made free by his bonds, happy by his miſery, fed by his hunger, refreſht by his wearineſs, rejoyced by his anguiſh? [Thou, my Soul] be excuſed before *God*, by his being accuſed before men? And ſhall not love flush and burn in my breſt to him? Oh, my *God*, do thou inflame my heart with this Love; kindle ſome further heat of Love in me; give me one dram more of it; draw up my Love, and moſt entire & intimate affections. Shall I, as it were, freeze, for want of Love to my Saviour, when his Love is ſo hot to me?

Far be it from me. No, my loving Lord, I do love thee, I will love thee dearly: Oh help and enable me to love thee more. Oh my Soul, ſleep not under ſuch Comforts, never forget ſuch love as this is; it is ſufficient to fill all thy ſences, all thine affections.

And yet ſee more, This Love is not only for ſome years, but for eternity; *Whom he once loves he loves to the end*; as *John* 13. 1. He is a never failing Fountain of Love: Oh my Soul, therefore diſtruſt not, deſpair not of his Love; though thou art ſo full of ſins, which indeed of all things *God* hates moſt, yet behold the Love of *God*: all theſe, though ſo great, ſo many, they cannot ſeparate between thee and thy *God*; but in and through Chriſt he ſtill loves thee, accepts thy perſon and ſervices.

It's not ſome ſlips or falls, that thou art overtaken withal, that are hated, reſolved againſt; not wittingly, willingly, deliberately committed, nor delighted in, nor allowed, but ſlipt, and fallen into unawares; Theſe cannot finite his infinite Love: He that dyed and bled for thee, will not loſe thee, now he hath done ſo much for thee:

No,

No, thy ſins ſhall not eternally ſeparate thee from him: Sin may over-cloud the beams of his Love, but it ſhall not cut off the Being of his Love to thee; Be thou ſenſible of thy load of ſin, and thou art capable of his Love. He that ſuffered not a cup of cold water to go unrewarded, will not permit a tear, for thy ſins, or for his Love, to go without reward: Let not the ſenſe of thy own wretched, miſerable, and undone condition diſcourage thee, nor the fear of his diſpleaſure diſhearten thee; there is Love enough in him for all that: there is a Sun within theſe Clouds; there's Love within theſe frowns: Can Chriſt forget thee, whoſe burning Love made him ſweat drops of blood for thee? No, he cannot, he will not; he may withdraw himſelf to ſharpen thy deſire; he may ſeem loſt to inflame thee to ſeek more earneſtly and inſtantly: It may be, my Soul, thou thinkeſt thou wanteſt him, becauſe thou deſireſt him, and doſt not ſenſibly at ſome times feel thou haſt him, but know thou deſireſt him, becauſe thou loveſt him: you know it's ſo in natural love, and thou couldſt not love him, had he not firſt loved thee: But if thy ſinful neglects

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have ſent him away from thee, let thy future diligence draw him home to thee. If thou haſt loſt him by ſin, ſeek him by true repentance, and he will be found of thee: He cannot be long abſent from a weeping Soul. He is Love, and that will yearn and melt when it ſees tears. If thy ſins fear the hand of Juſtice, lo Love is a Sanctuary. If thy ſins make thee tremble before the Judg, Love is an Advocate; there's nothing but the Love of Chriſt to thee will do it for thee, and ſupply it to thee. Oh my dear-bought Soul, that coſt ſo precious a price as the very heart-blood of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, wrap up thy ſelf in this conſideration, Want not comfort while thou haſt or mayſt have enough, yea abundance; but make him, that is all in all, to be thy All, in all thy Wants and Neceſſities; Thou canſt want nothing but his *ABUNDANT LOVE* can ſupply thee.

Art thou cold in holy duties? His love can warm thee. Art thou flat in thy ſpirit? His love can rouze thee. Art thou ſtill hard under the means? His love

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can ſoften and melt thee. Art thou liveleſs under ordinances? His love can quicken thee. Art thou incorrigible under afflictions? His love can bend thee. Art thou fallen by any ſin? His ardent love can raiſe thee, and revive thee, and make thee alive. Oh excellent comfort, joy unexpreſſible, and love ſurpaſſing! Oh thou who art Love it ſelf, who art only amiable, thou whom my Soul loveth, longeth for, and thirſteth after, panteth for, as the hunted Hart after the rivers of water! Oh *God*, my *God*, come thou, oh come thou, and do all this to my poor ſoul. Oh warm, heat, and inflame me with love to thee who hath ſo loved me. Oh melt my heart with thy love; revive and quicken me that am ſo dull and dead in my ſelf; ſhed thy love abroad in my heart more and more, which may enable me to expreſs ſincere, cordial and hearty love to thee, all the days of my life, by walking more cloſely with thee, and truſting more in thee, and reſting more on thee. [Oh my ſoul] make that good the Scripture ſaith, *They that know thy name will truſt in thee.* Its *the Work* that *God* appoints thee to do, *to believe* Pſa. 9 10.

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in Chriſt; as *Joh.6.29.* Alſo it's *his commandment that we beleeve in the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*; 1 *Joh.3.23.* And Chriſt himſelf calls thee, that art *weary of, and heavy laden* with the burden of thy ſins, to *come* to him, and he promiſeth to *eaſe* thee, or *give thee reſt*, *Math.11.28.* And he calls out to any that will come, *Ho every one that thirſteth, come ye to to the waters, and ye that have no money; come, and buy, and eat yᵉ, come buy wine and milk without money and without price*, *Iſa.55.1.* And ſo *Revel.22.17. Every one that thirſteth, let them come: and whoever will come and drink freely of the waters of life. And whoſoever comes to him he will not caſt off*, *Joh.6.37.* And beſides all theſe offers of Chriſt and his command to beleeve, there's abundance of ſweet promiſes which *God* hath made to them that beleeve; as *Joh.3.16. God ſo loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever beleeveth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* Alſo Verſe 36. *He that beleeveth on the Son hath everlaſting life.* He is as ſure, and as certain of it, as if he had it already in poſſeſſion. And

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*God delights in them that hope in his mercy, Pſa.*147.11. And *the Lord redeemeth the ſouls of his ſervants, and none that truſt in him ſhall periſh, Pſa.* 34.22. The Lord is a ſhield and a helper to all them that truſt in him.

Now *God* that made theſe rich, free, and precious promiſes, is Truth it ſelf, and therefore is [ſo] in performing all his promiſes. *God is not as man, that he ſhould lye; neither as the ſon of man, that he ſhould repent. Hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it? And hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not accompliſh it?* O yes: as *Numb.*23.19.

Nay more, it's a part of his Covenant with his people; therefore (Oh my Soul) preſs the Lord with his Covenant, and he will perform it, even to thee; and ſo all his promiſes alſo. What good thing doſt thou or canſt thou want, either ſpiritual, temporal, or eternal, that God hath not promiſed to give thee? And what evil thing canſt thou fear, or ſuffer, that God hath not promiſed to ſave thee from the evil of it at leaſt?

Are there not promiſes of giving thee Chriſt, and with him perfect Righteouſneſs

neſs, and Juſtification? and in this life, ſuch a meaſure of Sanctification, as he will accept of, both all the neceſſary graces of the Spirit, and victory over every luſt, and perfect Sanctification after death; as alſo a ſufficient ability to every ſervice and duty; a paſsing by, and covering of all imperfections, and perſeverance to the end, and in the end, life everlaſting? Again, a ſanctified uſe of all Afflictions, either preſervation from, or deliverance out of them, in the beſt time; with ſuch Adminiſtration of all outward neceſſaries, as he ſhall ſee beſt, for his glory, and thy good. Aſsiſtance alſo in any ſufferings for his name, and a reward for them. And what now can be thy eſtate, in which thou mayeſt not hope, yea, and joy in that hope too? as *Rom.* 12. 12.

Art thou under the guilt of ſome ſin, power of ſome luſt, want of ſome grace, abſence of Gods Spirit, or aſſurance of Gods favor; or under ſome perſecution, or outward affliction? Hath not God promiſed to ſupply that good, ſave from that evil? Why then my ſoul, ſhouldſt not thou joy in hope of it; or mayeſt

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thou not have hope, ſince God hath promiſed it? And why doth not thy hope beget joy? in outward things it doth ſo.

Thou mayeſt ſee the full joyes of Heaven, Chriſts preſence, Gods face, perfect glory; and theſe all enjoyed by thee, all enjoyed, I ſay, by hope; and that by ſuch *an hope as cannot fail*, Rom. 5. 5. *as makes not aſhamed.* Its ſure, and preſents the things hoped for; moſt ſure, for it hath the certainty of Faith for its ground; and that is the certainty of God himſelf. For Faith buildeth on Gods promiſes, and they are moſt certain; confirmed by two immutable things.

Firſt, The Word of God.

Secondly, The Oath of God.

Heb. 6. 16, 17, 18, 19. *For men ſwear an oath for confirmation, it is then an end of all ſtrife. God willing more abundantly, to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe, the immutability of his counſel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which, it was impoſſible for God to lie, we might have a ſtrong conſolation. Which Hope, we have as an Anchor of the ſoul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt:* Yea, thy Faith, and Hope hath, as

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the immutability, ſo the fidelity, and truth of God to reſt upon: he can as well ceaſe to be God, as not to be ſo good as his Word It hath alſo the purpoſe and decree of God; for Gods promiſes are onely the expreſsions of his purpoſe and decree. And as the Mercy of God, ſo it hath alſo the Merit of Chriſt; the efficacy of his Obedience, Paſsion, and Interceſsion. And thus alſo its ſure; for Chriſt hath merited all good things, for thee, preſent and to come; whether it be pardon of ſin, victory over ſin, ſubduing thy corruption, the favor of God, or what ever elſe thou wanteſt. And its neceſsitated now by Gods Juſtice alſo, That being ſatisfied by Chriſt, and his ſatisfaction by God accepted. Oh, why then ſhouldſt not thou joy in hope of all theſe? O conſider the ſtrength of all theſe Arguments, to cauſe and increaſe, Hope and Joy in thee. *The joy of the Lord is our ſtrength, Nehe.*8.10. Therefore, O my ſoul, be thou no more ſo caſt down, for time to come; why art thou, or why ſhouldeſt thou be ſo? O rouze up, and encourage thy ſelf in thy God; and ſtrengthen thy Faith by meditating,

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on the truth and goodness of these promises; their excellencies, sweetness, and usefulness to thee, and by resisting doubtings; and so stir up thy Faith in them.

This is the place of living by Faith: therefore, O my soul, live thou by Faith, (that is) finde out a promise of what ever thou wantest, and venture on it with expectation, hoping above hope; and so fetch every thing thou needest from the promises. O that thou wouldst sing that triumphant Song, that the Apostle *Paul* doth, *Rom.* 8. 38, 39. *I am perswaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate thee, from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* O my soul, pray, and strive so to do. O that thou couldst say, as the same Apostle doth, *Phil.* 1. 23. *I desire to be dissolved, and be with Christ, which is best of all.* Truly, in the mean while, God alone is thy portion; for thou hast taken him so to be. And if God alone be present with thee, it's enough: He were not God, if he were not All-sufficient.

Now thou haſt him in Faith, in pledges, and earneſt, yea, in poſſeſsion; why then doſt thou not enjoy him? why doſt thou not ſhake off that ſenceleſs, drowſineſs, which makes thy life unpleaſant, and uncomfortable; as though thou hadſt none of God? O leave off over-heavineſs, to thoſe that want God, to thoſe that either know him not, or know him diſpleaſed, not in Chriſt.

Thou Lord ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterwards bring me to glory, as *Pſal.* 73. 24, 25, 26, 28. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth, that I deſire beſides thee. My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever. It is good for me to draw neer to God. I have put my truſt in the Lord God*; and lo, he anſwers, *I will not leave thee, nor forſake thee; no never*, as *Heb.* 13. 5. No, at no time. When thou art therefore in any ſtrait, or diſtreſs, that thou knoweſt not what to do; then go freely, and boldly to the throne of grace, in the Name, through the Mediation of Chriſt: There's a friend that will help thee, and relieve thee; ſuſtain, and deliver

liver thee. When all other helps fail, yet I ſay, he will never fail thee; do I ſay ſo? nay verily, of a truth, it is God himſelf ſaith it, by his Spirit, ſpeaking in his Apoſtle. Therefore, build on it, reſt on it, as moſt certain: For as God is truth it ſelf, ſo are all his promiſes; let them be beleeved by thee. Preſs the Lord with his own word or promiſe; and he will perform them even to thee. Lord, thou haſt ſaid, that *ſin ſhall not have dominion over us*, as *Rom.* 6.14. O let it not have have dominion over me, make good that word of thine to me. O when ſhall that time once be? O, that thou wouldſt this day, nay, this very hour, at once, kill all ſin in me. Lord thou haſt ſaid, *Thou wilt ſubdue our iniquities.* Mich. 7.19 O Lord, do thou it in me, for they are too ſtrong for me. Is any thing to hard for God? no ſure, ſurely thou haſt power enough to do it. And thou ſaidſt thou art willing; O, what then hinders? O my God, let thy Spirit come, ſend it with power; and make its vertue to appear, in ſubduing all ſin in me; and raiſing me up to a new, a holy life; ſuch a life, as thou wouldſt have me live. Lord thou haſt ſaid, *That we ſhall ſeek*

thee with all our hearts; and that thou wilt be found of us, Jere. 29. 13, 14. O remember thine own everlasting Covenant, made with thy servants, *Jere.* 32. 40. *That thou wilt put thy fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from thee.* And thou hast said, *Thou wilt comfort me, and we shall be comforted, even as one whom his mother comforts, Is.* 66. 13. Lord make good these promises, in which thou hast caused thy servant to trust. *O keep thy servant, that no presumptuous sins prevail over me. And cleanse me from my secret sins; yea, from all my sins of thought; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent, and free, from the great transgressions. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer.*

A

A SERMON

Composed for the

FUNERAL

Of that precious Woman

Mrs ANNE SKELTON,

of S. *Andrews* in *Norwich.*

HOSEA 13. 14.

O death! I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction!

THis Chapter easily divideth it self into three parts:

1. A grievous Reprehension, to v. 10.

2. A sad Comination from the 10. to the 14. *verse*.

3. A seasonable Consolation from the beginning of the *verse*, where my Text is couch't, to the end of the Chapter. My Text begins the last part of the Chapter: The sense of which is ambiguously controverted by Expositors. Some will have it to be a promise meerly relating to the deliverance of the Jews out of Captivity; in which sense some conceive the same phrase (almost) taken, *Isai.* 25.8. But it is plain from the Apostles Commentary, 2 *Cor.* 15.55. that it is not to be restrained to that sense. The Hebrews opinion is altogether for it; But Christian Interpreters, guided by the Apostle, generally render it a prediction of the deliverance of the Elect from Sin, Death, and Hell, by the Lord Jesus Christ. Some Controversie there is yet amongst them about the direct sense, some amongst which is *Calvin*, and *Oecolampadius* will have it to be a spiritual promise, but conditional; as if the sense were this: If they had repented and turned unto me, I had delivered them even from the gates of Death. But *Jerom*, with others, make it an absolute

promiſe of a Redemption from from Sin and Death by Chriſt, and will make the words to be the ſpeech of Chriſt promiſing Redemption to his Elect. Joyn both together, and the ſenſe is perfectly this; Chriſt doth here promiſe Redemption to his Elect, under the type of the deliverance of the Children of *Iſrael* out of *Babylon*. The deliverance of the Children of *Iſrael* out of *Babylon* was typical: That's promiſed here, *viz.* That after a certain time he would redeem them out of the power of the Babyloniſh Captivity, where they ſhould lye as buried for a while. But the Antitype was the *Elect of God*, to whom Chriſt promiſeth a Redemption from Death and the Grave. [*I,*] I, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Jehovah, the ſecond Perſon in the Trinity. [*Will Ranſom,*] Redeem: It ſignifies to deliver out of ſome bondage, by vertue of a price paid by another for his friend. I will pay the debt due to my Fathers Juſtice and Wrath, and buy them out of their natural ſlavery. [*Them*] The Elect, in a ſpiritual ſenſe; the Jews, in a plain ſenſe; as the words are a promiſe of a deliverance out of the Babyloniſh Captivity. [*From the hand of the*

Grave.] that is, the power of the Grave: To be in ones hand, is to be in their power; therefore our Translation readeth it, power. [*Of the Grave.*] The Babylonish Grave, if you look upon the promise, as meerly respecting them. 1. Sin, 2. Death, and 3. Hell, are all here understood: So the Apostle applies it, 1 *Cor.* 15. Thus Christ hath fulfilled it for his Saints. [*I will redeem them from death.*] It is but a repetition of what was promised before: The word is doubled, for it is certain. [*O death!*] Christ speaks O death, Spiritual, Temporal, Eternal. [*I will be thy plagues.*] *O grave, I will be thy destruction!*] I, Jesus Christ, [*will be,*] by my coming, and dying, and rising again, [*will be,*] in time; 'tis yet but a little while, but I will come and tread upon thy neck. [*thy plagues.*] *Ferom* and *Ambrose* read it *vñ Oe*, thy contention. I will engage in the quarrel betwixt thee, and my elected ones. Death had a quarrel against all the children of *Adam*, by vertue of that original word, *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely dye.* Others read it, [*Plagues or Destruction.*] The difference ariseth from the neerness

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of kin that is betwixt the Heb. words, ſignifying Contention, and the Hebraw word, ſignifying Plagues. The Greeks read it νίκη, Victory; I will be thy Conqueror. Others read it δίκη, Puniſhment, juſt Puniſhment, &c. I will be thy ruine with Juſtice. [*O grave, I will be thy deſtruction.*] Thy ſting, thy cutting off. Here Chriſt ſaith, I will be. The Apoſtle triumpheth as of the thing done, 2 Cor. 15. 55. *O death, where's thy ſting?* &c. Chriſt having then dyed, conquered death, riſen, and aſcended. You have now the ſenſe.

If you look on the whole Verſe, you have in it theſe three parts.

1. A redemption promiſed, in which you may note;
   1. The Redeemer; *I Chriſt.*
   2. The Act; *I will redeem.*
   3. The Redeemed; *Them.*
   4. The time; *I will.*
   5. The ſlavery; *Death, the Grave.*
2. The manner of this redemption:
   1. By himſelf; I being deaths ruine.
   2. With a price paid; I will redeem.
   3. The confirmation of it; *Repentance ſhall be hid from mine eyes.* I cannot change

change or eat my words; I have ſaid it, and it ſhall be done.

My Text contains the ſecond part, where you have Chriſt threatning death to be its plagues, and the grave to be its deſtruction. The Doctrine is ſhortly this.

Doct. *Chriſt for his Believers is become deaths plague, and the graves deſtruction.*

There is no change in the Doctrine from the very words of the Text; only what Chriſt here ſpake in the future tenſe, *I will*, I have put in the preterperfect tenſe, (as the Apoſtle.) Chriſt propheſied his coming by *Hoſea*, we preach the propheſie fulfilled.

Two things would here for Explication be enquired into.

1. What death Chriſt is a plague to.

2. How Chriſt became the plague of death, and the deſtruction of the grave to his people.

The diſtinction of death is ordinarily known.

1. *Spiritual*; which is the ſouls death in ſin: We were all of us dead in ſins.

2. *Temporal*; which is the ſeparation of the ſoul from the body.

3. The

3. The third is *Eternal*; The death of body and ſoul for ever.

The firſt conſiſts in the ſeparation of the ſoul from God: The ſecond in the ſeparation of the body from the ſoul; The third in the ſeparation of both body and ſoul from the preſence of God for ever. If it be askt concerning which of theſe Chriſt ſpeaks, and to which of theſe Chriſt is a plague and deſtruction.

I ſhortly anſwer to all: Firſt, he is a plague to the *Spiritual Death*, a deſtruction to that grave. *Epheſ.* 2. 1, 5. *You hath he quickened, who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.* By reaſon of *Adams* fall all the elect became dead in ſins, and *children of wrath by nature, as well as others.* Chriſt coming quickens the dead ſoul with his enlivening Grace. *Ezek.* 16. 6. *I ſaid unto thee, while thou wert in thy blood live; yea, I ſaid unto thee, while thou wert in thy blood live.* O death! Spiritual Death, he hath been, he is, he will dayly be thy plague. 1.

Secondly, He is a plague to *Temporal Death*: Indeed it is the laſt enemy that ſhall be put under the Conquerors feet, before he reſigneth up the Kingdom to his Father. 2.

But

First, *He is a plague to it*; for he hath delivered us out of the power of it, he hath made the door ſtand meerly by the latch: When *Adam* had his *mittimus* made to the Gaol of the Grave, Death turns the lock, bolts up the door, when he had gotten him but once in his cuſtody, never intending to part with the priſoner more: Chriſt ſeeing the Gaoler ſo confident in his Tyranny, Well, ſaith he, let him be good of his office, for *I will ranſom them frō the power of the grave*; I will make Death know, he is but to keep his priſoner *till further order*. Indeed this was decretally done, before the beginning of the world, by Chriſts Word given to his Father: and Chriſt ever and anon, in the time of the Jews, let his elected ones know there was an evaſion out of the grave, by the reſurrection of ſeveral perſons; but the time of Chriſts actual and full becoming the plague of death, and the deſtruction of the grave, was when he dyed, and roſe, and led captivity captive. Thus Chriſt is the plague of Death, and the deſtruction of the grave, for all men and women in the world; but to his Elect, only for good, there is

an escape-way out of the deepest grave already; and at the last day there shall be an actual freedom.

Secondly, He is to Beleevers the plague of this Death, and the destruction of this Grave, *by taking away the cause of fear of this death out of all their hearts*, they can stand upon the top of the grave, and sing, *O Death, where is thy sting? O Hell, where is thy victory?* The Elect (had it not been for Christ) for fear of death *had all their life time been subject to bondage*, Heb. 2. 15. *Forasmuch therefore as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part with them*, v. 14. *that he might deliver them.* The Saints of God can stand over the grave and say, *Surely the bitterness of death is past*, though they cannot say the time of death is past.

3dly, Christ to his Elect is the plague of Death temporal, in that *he hath taken away the final evil of it*, and hath made that which would have been the matter for ruine and evil, to be their desire and servant for good. Death thought to have been gaoler of the bodies of Gods Saints, till the day of judgment, and then Hell

should

ſhould have had them delivered up. God ſays, No; their bodies ſhall be in thy cuſtody, but thou ſhalt deliver them up refined to Glory, to Eternal Reſt, to be with me for ever: So that now it is the voyce of Gods child, *I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt*: And *in this we groan earneſtly, being burthened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality may be ſwallowed up of life.* Death is eaſe now to the Saints of God, the hard ſtones are but pillows of doun: The grave, from a place of terror, is turned into a retiring houſe, from the buſie ſweating world. *O death!* Chriſt is thy plague: *O grave! he is thy deſtruction.*

3. Thirdly, Chriſt is the plague and deſtruction of Eternal Death: they ſhall never taſte of that; Beleevers *are paſt from death to life*: He that is the *Amen, that was dead and is alive, yea alive for ever more*, he hath the keyes of Hell and Death, *Rev.* 1.18. Chriſt is the Angel that came down from heaven, *Rev.* 20.1. *that hath the key of the bottomleſs pit; and he that hath a part in the firſt reſurrection, on him the ſecond death hath no power:*

power: Rev. 2. 11. Overcoming Saints ſhall not be hurt by the ſecond death: Now *this is our victory that overcometh the world, even our faith:* Beleevers are Conquerors in and through Chriſt, and Chriſt hath conquered hell for them; for the lake which burns with fire and brimſtone is the ſecond death, *Rev.* 21. 8. Chriſt now hath ſaved them from this; this hath no power over them. O death! he is thy plague: O grave! he is thy deſtruction. Thus I have opened the firſt, and ſhewed you what Death, what Grave Chriſt is a plague to.

Now let me ſhew you in the next place, How Chriſt is the plague of death & the grave of deſtruction? To this I ſhall anſwer in three or four particulars briefly.

1. By his enlivening Spirit.
2. By his dying Love,
3. By his riſing Power.
4. By his aſcending and reigning Glory.

Firſt, *By his enlivening power:* Thus he is the plague of ſpiritual death; he comes and ſees the ſoul that he hath choſen, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; it neither ſpeaks, nor hears, nor ſees, nor moves ſpiritually

spiritually; it is more cold then the frozen earth: Christ breathes into it the breath of life. *The Son quickeneth whom he will.* Christ doth it meritoriously: The Spirit doth it instrumentally; *Joh.* 6.63. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth:* He maketh the dead soul to begin to hear the voyce of the Son of God, and live; to begin to relish heavenly things, and savor things which are above; to stand upon its legs, and walk a little in the ways of godliness.

Joh 5.21. Iohn 6.63

Secondly, By his dying Love: Christs death was that which destroyed death; He was the first of those that rose from the dead, by power from himself to live for ever: Christ dying shewed the grave his power: Christs dying was the plague of death:

1. *In his own example:* He brake through the bolted door of the Grave, though the stone was rolled and sealed: He was he *that was dead, and is alive; yea, that lives for evermore.* O Death! he was thy plague in himself; he was dead and is alive, thy lock could not keep him.

1 Pet. 3 18

2. *In the merit of it:* Christs death in the

the merit of it, was the plague of death, and the deſtruction of the grave: *The ſting of death is ſin,* (ſaith the Apoſtle.) Chriſt dying ſatisfied his Fathers Wrath and Juſtice: So that though death lives for a while, yet he lives without a ſting; it can do no member of Chriſt hurt; and it ſhall not live long neither: for though it be *the laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed,* yet it ſhall dye too, 1 *Cor.* 15. 26. Chriſts death was the graves deſtruction, it deſtroyed ſins life, which is the ſpiritual death; for Chriſt having dyed, ſin is dead too, *Rom.*6.6. *Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might from henceforth be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin.* Verſ.9,10. *In that he dyed, he dyed once unto ſin.* Verſ.11. *Likewiſe reckon you your ſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin.* By Chriſts death, temporal death is deſtroyed, in the power of it, for he himſelf *led captivity captive:* In the fear of it, *Foraſmuch as the children were partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf took part with them, that through death he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, even the devil: And deliver them that*

through fear of death were all their life time ſubject to bondage, Heb. 2. 13, 14. In the bitterneſs of it; for now we know that while we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord. O death! Chriſt dying hath been thy death; And ſo for eternal death: for he hath, by his death ſatisfied, ſo ſatisfied his Fathers Wrath, that now the ſecond death ſhall have no power over us.

3ly. Chriſt is the plague of death, *by his riſing power*: The power of Chriſts Reſurrection is great upon death: Therefore the Apoſtle tells us, *Rom.* 6.4. *That like as Chriſt was raiſed from the dead, by the glory of his Father, even ſo alſo we ſhould walk in newneſs of life, being firſt planted into the likeneſs of his death, then of his reſurrection,* Verſ. 5. Chriſt riſing in himſelf was the plague of temporal death; Dying, he was a ſervant to it; Riſing, he became the Conqueror over it: *Being the firſt fruits of them that ſleep in the grave,* 1 *Corinth.* 15.20. And riſing, he became the plague of death *for his people*: His Reſurrection was but a type and a propheſie, that thoſe that that ſleep in the duſt ſhall have a morning

Col. 3. 1.

to

to awake in: this the Apoſtle fully proves in the former part of his 15. Chap. of the firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*; it is a pillar upon which all the Saints of God ought to build their faith, in the Article of the reſurrection of the body: And from that premiſe, an undenyable argument may be brought to confirm our Faith in the reſurrection of the body, as the Apoſtle diſputes there: yea, and his reſurrection was the plague of eternal death: for by his reſurrection the love declared in his death became victorious, and his death meritorious: it would have argued, that the debt had not been payd to infinite Juſtice, if the priſoner had not been ſet at liberty by the reſurrection of his body: Now *who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of Gods elect? It is God that juſtifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that dyed; yea rather that riſen is again:* *Rom.* 8. 34. But the freeing of the priſoner argues the ranſom is payd, and Juſtice ſatisfied.

Fourthly, Chriſt, *by his aſcending and living in Glory, is become the plague of death:* Spiritual death is thus deſtroyed, as ſoon as it begins to creep upon the

Saints of God. Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God to make interceſſion for them, *Rom.*8.34. *And now we know that if we ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, even Chriſt the Righteous,* 1 *Joh.* 2.1. Thus Temporal death was deſtroyed; for it appeared by this, That he did not come out of the grave with deaths leave, upon condition to return a priſoner again. *Rev.*1.18. *He lives that was dead,* Eph.4.8. *and is alive for evermore.* He roſe no more to go down to the priſon again; thus *Eternal Death* is deſtroyed too. For, *In that we know our Redeemer lives, we know we ſhall ſee him with theſe eyes, and live with him in Glory.* Therefore the Pſalmiſt putteth them together; *He hath aſcended up on high, and led Captivity* [all kind of Captivity] *Captive:* In that he is aſcended to *his Father, and our* Joh.20.17 *Father; our God, and his God;* We know Joh.14.3. he is not *amiſſus*, but *præmiſſus*, not loſt, but gone before to prepare a place for us, and that *he will one day come again, and receive us to himſelf, that where he is, there we may be alſo.*

5. Laſtly, He will yet be the plague and deſtruction of death and the grave, *by his freeing*

freeing and acquitting power, at the great day, when he ſhall come to judg the quick and dead, when he ſhall come in his Glory, and ſhall ſound the Trumpet to a Reſurrection: *Gather my Saints together, thoſe that have made a Covenant with me by Sacrifice:* Then ſhall there not the leaſt ſmell of the death of ſin remain about the bodies or ſouls of his Servants; then the priſon of the grave ſhall fly open, and be ſhut no more for ever; all the bars and locks of the grave ſhall fly off, and death it ſelf ſhall be deſtroyed, and all bodies have a *liberavit*; then ſhall the Robes of Righteouſneſs be put on the ſouls and bodies of his Saints, and the Crown of Glory ſhall be put upon their heads, even the Crown of Everlaſting Life; then ſhall all the redeemed ones of the Lord be actually declared before all the world to be free for ever, not only from the firſt, but the ſecond death; and the Saints that have been buried in Chriſts Death, and quickened by his Reſurrection, ſhall for ever live with him in Glory, and ſing for ever, *O death, where's thy ſting? O hell, where's thy victory?* Thus Chriſt is the plague of Death, and the de- 1 Cor. 15. 26.

ſtruction of the Grave.

I have done with the Doctrinal part, and am come to Application.

Firſt, It ſhall ſerve for Inſtruction; ſecondly, for Conſolation; and laſtly, for Exhortation.

1. Firſt, For Inſtruction: *It may inſtruct us how wonderfully beholden every Saint of God is to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

1. Do but conſider *what he hath done for thee:* He hath delivered thee; Is that all? No, he hath redeemed thee; it argues a price paid for thee, to deliver thee from ſin, the grave, and hell: Wert not thou all mired with ſin, under the power and command of ſin, a ſlave to thy baſe luſts and corruptions, *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins?* Who hath quickened thee? Who hath ſaid to thee *in thy blood live?* Was it not he that hath here ſaid, *O death, I will be thy death? Who ſhall deliver me from this body of death?* (ſaith the Apoſtle.) *O wretched man that I am, &c. I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. O death, he is thy death!*

Rom. 7. 24, 25

2. Thou art redeemed from the *power of the grave, and from the bitterneſs of it:* Who hath done this? Was it not he

again

again that took flesh, and became partaker with us of it, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of it, and deliver them that all their life time, through fear, were subject to bondage.

3. *Who hath saved thee from the second death*, from hell, and eternal torments, but thy Saviour who hath put this song into thy mouth, *O hell, where's thy victory?* But consider again how Jesus Christ hath done this, *by his own dying*. Christ dyed in the flesh, that thou mayst not dye in thy sins; himself tasted the bitterness of the cup, that he might leave it sweet to all his children. Is not thy heart won with his love, Christian? Dost thou see him encounter thy three great enemies, the first, the second, the third death? for so I may call them: Dost thou see him dying in the fight, and conquering by his dying pains? O my Soul, thou art drawn with strong cords of love, *run after him*.

Secondly, From hence we may learn *of what use and comfort every Act of Christ is, and may be to believers.* His death, his rising, his ascension, nothing of what he did was too little, nor any thing too much; there could have wanted nothing, and

there was nothing redundant; if he had not dyed, he had not merited deliverance from Spiritual Death; if he had not riſen, he had not conquered Natural Death; if he had not aſcended, he had not led all Captivity Captive. Let every action of Chriſt comfort thee, who did all that he did for thee.

Thirdly, From hence we may be inſtructed, *why ſo many are afraid of death*; Temporal Death I mean. The cauſe may be double, either a want of Chriſt, or a want of Faith. 1. Wicked, vile wretches they are afraid to dye: Oh that that cup might ever paſs from them; they know not how to think of that day, and parting hour; and truly no great marvel, death with its ſting in it, will fear the ſtouteſt man in the world: For a poor wretch to be ready to dye, and cry out, Now goes out my poor ſoul to anſwer for all my oaths and blaſphemies, for all my Sabbath breaking and profaneſs; now muſt I take my leave of all comforts, friends, wife, children, all adieu for ever. If death be not kil'd it ſelf, it kills the heart of the ſtouteſt, the poor wretch cannot ſee that Chriſt hath redeemed him from the pow-

er

er of the grave. 2. Gods own dear children may fear death, through a want of faith, not applying, with such a confidence as they ought, the merits and vertue of Christs death to their souls. Those now that the Lord hath given a perswasion to, that they have an Interest in Jesus Christ, those dye without fear, they know their Redeemer lives; and this was the happiness of this precious Saint of God, that he hath now taken from us: She had comforted her self against the fear of Death, that she could say, *O death, where's thy sting?* Therefore in a book she had composed and written for her own use, to comfort her against the fear of Death. She makes it her work to prove her interest in Christ, and did it by several marks, which made her dye without giving death an ill word, or countenance; death came, but he had lost his sting, Christ had been its plague.

Her book is annexed to this Sermon.

A second Use may be of Consolation to *comfort the children of God against the fear of death*; Lift up your heads, O ye righteous! be glad ye upright in heart! All your enemies are trodden under foot; fear not sin, death, nor hell. 2.

Death

Death hath loſt its ſting, Hell hath loſt its victory. 1. *Fear not ſpiritual death: Sin ſhall no longer have dominion over your mortal bodies*; for Chriſt hath died to free you from the guilt of it, and to deliver you from the power of it. It may live, it ſhall not reign; it may fight againſt, it ſhall not conquer you. 2. *Fear not temporal death:* Conſider the Waſp hath loſt its ſting. What hurt can it do thy ſoul? It is not thy ruine Chriſtian! It is thy perfection. *Luke* 13 32. *I do cures, ſaith Chriſt, to day, and to morrow, and the third day I ſhall be perfected.* Thou art not perfected here Chriſtian! there is a crown of glory, that the Father will ſet on thy head with the black hand of death. Who fears the Serpent, that hath loſt its teeth? the Bee that hath loſt its ſting. O death, Chriſt hath been thy death! Though thou mightſt be afraid to take up death, when it was a Serpent, yet ſee its turned into a rod. What is thy life Chriſtian? is it not full of frowns? are not all thy days almoſt tears and ſorrow? Doth not the wicked world look a ſquint upon the Saints of God? is not ſuffering an hereditary diſeaſe, that runs in the blood

blood of Mighty Jesus? that every Saint is born to inherit the Cross, and through *Golgotha*, to take his way to glory? what should wed thee to the world Christian? not thy desire of life; and sure it cannot be thy fear of death. Death hath nothing formidable in it: Say to it *Christ is dead. O death where is thy sting then?* Much less can they fear eternal death; for they are passed from death to life, and the second death hath no power over them.

I have but a word more, and that is of Exhortation. First, To all, to get an interest in Jesus Christ. Thus prepare your selves for the day of dissolution; It is a statute in the Records of Heaven, That all men should once die, and afterwards come to judgment. Death is a bitter cup to those that know nothing to sweeten it. Learn here to get a part in the Lord Jesus Christ, a title to him, an interest in him: He hath taken out the sting of death; he hath been its plague, but not for all, see therefore for thy interest in him: *Hic labor, hoc opus est*; Christians, here is your work, you spend else your time for nothing, and your labor for that which will not profit. *Work out your* 3.

salvation

ſalvation; give all diligence to make your calling and election ſure. This is your land-work Saints; and while it is done, you will never be prepared to go to Sea, to ſet ſail for eternity; he will never be ſatisfied with time and days, that hath not ſome grounds to hope for eternity. O that you would labor to make this work, your work: You ſpend your days in labor and ſorrow; and when you die, you will lie down in ſorrow. Believe it, you that ſpend your ſtrength, for that which will not profit; you will ſee the day when your ſouls will be troubled for the hours loſt in dreſſing & vanity, in the following the luſts of the eye, and of the fleſh. O make this your work, to get a portion in Chriſt, and believe him (who though he knows but little, knows that) you will finde it a difficult work; a work, that will be enough for the time, and for the ſtrength you have to ſpend. If you have Chriſt, you are well, if not, you die a ſlave to death, and will be a gally-ſlave to Satan in Hell for ever. O that you would be wiſe, and conſider your latter end, before you come down wonderfully. This was the work, and conſtant work

work of this precious Siſter of ours, whom God hath now taken from the evil to come. It was her practice to haſten over the buſineſs of her family, as a thing to be done, yet not her great work; and then to apply her ſelf to the great work of making her calling and election ſure. In which, her pains were as unwearable, as others are in vanity. That ſhe hath left behinde her ſeveral Books written, which are as the Chronicle and Annuals of her life; collecting thoſe promiſes on which her ſoul reſted; framing the objections of her own ſpirit, and ſeeking out ſatisfaction from Gods Word. If in any thing ſhe doubted, ſhe enquired at the lips of them that ſhould preſerve knowledg, and pens down their anſwers, obſerves Gods ways with her ſelf, and her own frame towards him; and from all, gathers up a poſie of ſuch evidences of ſaving Grace, as ſhe could finde in her ſoul, to comfort her in her latter hour. And if any asks, what profited this labor? I could onely have wiſhed, that ſuch perſons had been (as I was) a witneſs to her dying happineſs; to have ſeen with what a peace of Spirit, what a fulneſs of aſſurance

aſſurance, what hope, what joy, ſhe entertained her laſt affliction, the meſſenger of death: There they ſhould have ſeen this promiſe made good; the grave deſtroyed; the Saint delivered; hell trodden under foot; death deſired, conquered, deſpiſed; this ſong ſung, *O death where is thy ſting? O hell where is thy victory?*

Be exhorted, O ye that have a portion in Chriſt, *be exhorted to tred under foot your conquered enemy.* What is there in death, that is terrible or bitter, to thoſe that have a portion in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt? Why are you afraid to be made perfect? there is no taſte of hell in the cup. The priſon doors ſhall not be lockt; the bolts are broken off; the bitterneſs of death is paſt. O deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt: Love the winding-ſheet that wrapt up your Saviour; the ſtones and gravel of the grave, have nothing in them that is hard or harſh. Chriſt hath been the plague of death, and the deſtruction of the grave. *I heard a voyce from henceforth, ſaying, Bleſſed are they that die in the Lord; yea, (ſaith the*

the Spirit) *for they reſt from their labors.*

Laſtly, From this Text may thoſe that mourn for the dead, in the Lord, be comforted. Haſt thou loſt a believing friend? *Weep not for her, weep for thy ſelf:* Not that ſhe is gone, but that thou art here. Death hath our friend in his hands, but not in his power. It is Chriſt that hath ſaid, *I will redeem you from the power of the grave.* Is not Chriſt dead? is not he riſen again? and aſcended? hath he not led captivity captive? why mourneſt thou then for a Saints freedom? is there any thing of bitterneſs in the cup, that thy and her Father, hath given her to drink? Triumph, becauſe ſhe triumpheth; rejoyce, becauſe all tears are now wiped from her eyes; ſhew a faith in Chriſts death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, conqueſt over Sin, Death, and Hell. The work of Righteouſneſs is peace; and the effect of her Righteouſneſs, quietneſs, peace, and aſſurance for ever. 4.

FINIS.